

# Floral Styles and Designs

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# Traditional Styles

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Traditional flower arranging style typically refers to all floral designs originating worldwide prior to the early Twentieth Century. Our flower arranging style today is influenced by the rich accumulation of flower arranging history from the past, primarily Asian, European and Early American. American mid-20th century traditional flower arranging was the culmination of two main trends in the art of arranging flowers, and these trends have been our source of inspiration. These trends include influences from Asia with the Chinese emphasis on naturalism to the highly stylized linear designs of the Japanese and the influence of the massed bouquet art of Europe, which includes all of the "Period" styles. However, flower arranging in the U.S. developed its own individuality, combining attention to both line and mass, creating the many variations of the line, line mass and mass arrangements we see today.

Traditional "stylized" arrangements have been criticized in recent years for conforming to the criteria of a conventional form. But to be a style per se requires conformity to certain criteria. A good knowledge of the Traditional styles will provide a base for your flower arranging skill and enable you to move forward in floral design developing your own creativity. Remember this material is to be used as a guide and should be supplemented with your own research and careful reading of the Flower Show Schedule.

## European Period Designs

These designs taken from European historical periods are bouquet (mass) in form with no center of interest and no grouping of colors or kinds of plant materials. Quantities of garden flowers are used for texture, color, and form.

### Italian Renaissance 1400-1600

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**Characteristics:** The Renaissance saw non-religious art and art forms become more important. Floral beauty, with symbolic meaning and rich textures defined the arrangements of this era. Small flowers of bright, vivid colors were preferred and designs featured contrasting colors based on triadic harmonies. Design shapes were the arc, ellipse, and triangle. Designs were uncluttered, symmetrical and often combined fresh and dried material as well as fruits and vegetables, perhaps influenced by the Della Robbia wreath. The arrangement was usually the same height as the container or no more than two times the height.

**Containers:** Flowers were arranged in classical, basic shapes made of pottery, metal or glass. Pedestal vases, low bowls, picking baskets, and salvers are typical.

**Plant Material:** Anemone, apple, bell flowers, carnation, cucumber, daisy, iris, fig, gentian, grape, lily, honeysuckle, jasmine, laurel, lily, marigold, melon, monkshood, narcissus, olive, pansy, pinks, pomegranate, poppy, rose, violet and wheat. Tulips, peonies and amaranthus are not seen in Renaissance arrangements.

**Colors:** Bright, mixed colors in primary and secondary color triads were popular: red, blue, yellow; and orange, violet and green.

**Design Shape:** Triangle, arc and ellipse

### Dutch / Flemish 1600s-1700s

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**Characteristics:** A symmetrical massed oval, as depicted in the paintings of the era. These arrangements are tall; 2-3 times as tall as the height of container. In general they have an abundant, opulent appearance. They are highlighted by a large perfect flower at the top. Specimen blooms within the design are often shown in profile,

face out and even back-facing to highlight the beauty of nature from any angle. Placement is almost random. Flowers may cascade over the edges of the container.

Containers: Stone or alabaster urns, bronze ewers, pewter jars, amber or green glass bowls, vases, goblets; pottery bowls, Delft, terracotta urns (no shiny metals).

Plant Material: A great variety of flowers is characteristic, with little regard for seasonal compatibility. Spring flowers and bulbs are common, such as anemones, carnations, lilies, coleus, dahlias, foxgloves, hyacinths, iris, lilies, narcissus, peonies, roses and tulips. However they can be mixed randomly with tropicals and wildflowers. Fruits were important particularly grapes, pineapples, and pomegranates. Round forms are preferred. Foliage was incidental, usually provided by stems and leaves of featured foliage.

Colors: Strong vibrant jewel tones with white and pink providing highlights. Whenever possible, blue was used

Design Shape: Oval

Accessories: These were very important. They used many, such as fruit, birds' nests, insects, shells, nuts, books, and musical or scientific instruments. Even rich fabrics and jewels were used as accessories to denote wealth.

## **Biedermeier**

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A design in which pavé techniques are used to create concentric rings of flowers arranged in a compact rounded or slightly conical shape.

Characteristics: Biedermeier style originated in Austria and Germany during post-war years of 1815 to 1848 and is associated with a heavy style of furniture. In these bouquet style arrangements each ring contains one type of flower, which contrasts with the ring adjacent to it. The contrast of color, form and texture creates interest in the design. Many variations of the design are possible with spiral patterns or looser mixed flower placements while keeping planned alternating patterns. Berries, leaves, nuts, small vegetables or fruits may be used in the concentric rings.

Containers: Low bowls or footed compotes.

## **French Floral Designs**

The French arrangements, with exception of the later Empire period, were reflective of the soft pastel color harmony of the interior decorative arts. Light and airy, in contrast to the other European styles of the era, these designs stressed the beauty of the individual floral material.

### **Baroque: Louis XIV 1661-1715**

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Characteristics: Semi-ovoid mass; symmetrical; larger flowers used to define outside shape; opulent and magnificent arrangements. No focal point.

Containers: Bronze, gilded, alabaster, silver classical urns and containers of fine craftsmanship.

Plant Material: Anemone, carnation, lilac, poppy, snapdragon, tulip, and other period flowers.

Colors: Harmonious blending of medium-range pink, lavender, blue, putty, rouge, and gold.

Design Shape: To be determined by the schedule, container, plant material and artistic concept.

Accessories: Candlesticks, baroque angels, boxes.

## **Rococo: Louis XV 1715-1774**

[CLICK HERE for Photos](#)

Characteristics: A soft and feminine style, open airy, not strictly symmetrical; no focal area. Oval, S-curves and other curvilinear shapes often evident. Much taller than wide. Lots of rhythm with curves, flourishes, and lines of plant material. Sprays of flowers as well as individual flowers. Restraint shown in use of plant material so each is clearly seen.

Containers: Ceramic, porcelain, glass, crystal, and bronze urns, dolphins holding shells, cupids, shepherds as stems of vases, bowls, basket shapes, and epergnes.

Plant Material: Lilac, delphinium, peony, poppy, tulip, fern fronds, honeysuckle, and other period plant material.

Colors: Pale peach, buff, yellow, blue, pink; delicate color harmony; one color dominates with minor contrasts.

Design Shape: Curvilinear

Accessories: Fans, figurines, books, masks, boxes, needlework items.

## **Neoclassical: Louis XVI 1774-1793**

Characteristics: Flame-like shape; slim straight lines and tall curves; spiked flower forms. Influenced by Marie Antoinette, arrangements continue to be delicate, airy and feminine.

Containers: Tall, slender urns and baskets of crystal, bronze, porcelain, and silver.

Plant Material: Anemone, stock, larkspur, lilac, and other period flowers. Preference for white, fragrant blossoms.

Colors: Cool tones of blue, turquoise, green, mauve and gray highlighted with gold. White.

Design Shape: Flame-like

Accessories: Bisque figurines, porcelain birds and flowers.

## **Empire: Napoleon 1804-1814**

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Characteristics: Masculine designs dominated the Empire period. Militaristic designs replaced the formality and femininity of the previous eras and sometimes arrangements displayed emblems identifiable with Napoleon, such as a bee or the letter N. Arrangements are often a triangular mass of formal balance; a revival of classic designs; heavier and more compact than earlier French styles. Dense and structured.

Containers: Classical vases with Greek, Roman, Egyptian motifs in marble, alabaster, or porcelain, or vases hand-painted with scenes and flowers.

Plant Material: Ageratum, lily, ranunculus, rose, stock and other period flowers.

Colors: Brilliant hues of red, green, white, gold, yellow, and purple.

Design Shape: Triangle

Accessories: Clocks, candlesticks and decorative boxes.

## English Floral Designs

English designs exhibited the vast array of plant material growing in the lovely gardens of estates and in the countryside. Most were formal, large, triangular in shape, with symmetrical balance. They were influenced by decorative art of the Chinese and of the Italian Baroque Period.

### Early Georgian 1714-1760

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Characteristics: Triangular, symmetrical, heavy mass 1 to 2 times height of container. Flowers spillover rim; no particular focal area.

Containers: Classic designs in silver, marble, porcelain vases with faces or scenes, no brass.

Plant Material: Rose, baby's breath, Queen Anne's lace, gladiola, tulip, salvia, and other period flowers.

Colors: Warm and cool color contrasts, often monochromatic, especially all white.

Design Shape: Triangle

Accessories: Medallions, statuettes, Chinese horses.

### Late Georgian 1790-1830

[CLICK HERE for Photos](#)

Characteristics: Triangular shape with symmetrical balance. Less compact and ponderous; influenced by French Rococo to be more open. Sometimes combined flowers and fruit.

Containers: Footed vases, chalices, goblets, wine coolers, wide mouth bowls, tureens, lacquered turned wood, and epergnes.

Plant Material: Roses, snapdragons, lilies, carnations, pomegranates, and other period flowers; texture was an important factor.

Colors: More harmonious and softer hues of color.

Design Shape: Triangle

Accessories: Figurines, rose jars, and flowers laid on table.

### Victorian 1830-1901

[CLICK HERE for Early Victorian Photos](#)

[CLICK HERE for Mid Victorian Photos](#)

[CLICK HERE for Late Victorian Photos](#)

Characteristics: Victorian flower arrangements as a whole were compact, circular in design, with almost equal proportion of plant material to the size of the container. Flowers of different size and shape were massed together without a center of interest. Flowers might trail over the rim. Ferns and grasses might also be used. Nosegays (tussie mussies) were very popular. Designs were evocative of emotion and drama; used the "language of flowers."

Early Victorian designs showed a French influence. They were lighter than later designs with more open spaces. Rich, heavy colors were mixed with lighter hues and white.

By the Mid-Victorian era, arrangements were distinct in their casual placement of flowers with little restraint. They were often overdone with a profusion of different types of plant material.

Late-Victorian arrangements were even more ponderous, with flowers crowded in elaborate variety.

Containers: Flowers were arranged in ornate, gilded vases, footed trumpet vases, various forms of glass vases of the period, as well as compotes, epergnes, jars, cornucopia. They were made of ceramic, glass, porcelain, silver, alabaster, and various metals.

Plant Material: Often scented, plant material was full-blown. In addition to flowers used in earlier periods, Victorians used bleeding heart, calceolaria, chrysanthemum, cineraria, dahlia, ferns, foxglove, freesia, fuchsia, gardenia, heliotrope, honesty, hydrangea, jasmine, lilac, passion flower, peony, salpiglossis, stephanotis, stock, sweet pea, sweet william, tuberose, verbena and viola.

Colors: Bold, dark color contrasts were seen with thick, heavy textures; however, all white arrangements very popular.

Design shape: Globe or Circle

## **Tussie Mussie**

[CLICK HERE for Photos](#)

A Tussie Mussie is a small circular nosegay of flowers and herbs, tightly gathered and designed to carry a special message in the language of flowers during courtship. These little nosegays with meaning or “language” have their origin in England during the Victorian era and were used as coy exchanges of flirtation. Tussie Mussies were also sometimes carried close to the nose to ward off the stench in the streets and the plague and were composed primarily of scented herbs such as rosemary, thyme, and rue.

There were two styles of the Tussie Mussie - formal and informal. The formal nosegays had concentric rows of flowers with a rose or other fragrant symbolic flower in the center. Rows of flowers, leaves and herbs formed tight rings around this central flower. Informal Tussie Mussies were more casually arranged.

## **Art Nouveau 1890-1915**

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Characteristics: Art Nouveau, an original style without any earlier reference, grew out of a reaction to the crude mass products of the Industrial Revolution and the weighty darkness of the mid-Victorian period. On both sides of the Atlantic, leaders in and exponents of the Arts and Crafts movement-William Morris and Charles Rennie Macintosh (furniture and interior design); Tiffany and Lalique (glass and jewelry); Whistler, Redon, Rosetti and Beardsley (painting), among others-reflected a new empathy for things natural, simple, hand-made and organic. The art of Japan was a major influence.

In Art Nouveau arrangements, asymmetrical balance and dominance of line are key. The style is easily identified by a curvilinear line, often call the “whiplash,” which became the most expressive of the design elements. A lighter arrangement than the Victorian and more energetic than the Hogarth curve, it challenges the spherical mass preferred by the Victorians, and reflects the general interest in nature and botany, particularly in natural plant forms such as fronds, vines and tendrils.

Arrangements might consist of one pure, specimen bloom arrayed against twining, undulating greenery, or of a series of blooms of one flower, stems cut the same length. Plant material was often less than the height of the container and, sometimes, less than half. Plants might overhang the rim of the container considerably. The important thing is to be tasteful, scorning the excesses of the Victorians.

Containers: Art Nouveau vases, usually of rounded contour, were of a matte finish and decorated with images of flowers, insects or birds. Ginger jars and tall, flaring vases, popularized by Japanese porcelains, were used along



with pottery and opalescent glass, as in Tiffany designs. Cut glass was used in both vases and bowls. The tallish, glass vase was most popular. Wedgwood enjoyed a revival.

Plant Material: Acacia, aster, anemone, acanthus, carnation, calla and Easter lilies, daisy, freesia, fuchsia, honesty, iris, lilac, loniceria, poppy, tulip, fern, fruit branches and blossoms (cherry, peach, plum); smoke tree, camellia, dahlia, hydrangea, pansy, pussy willow and wisteria. Seedheads and berries. Popular foliage: Arum, asparagus plumose, acer palmatum, smilax, parthenocissus vitacea, caladium, coleus, croton, cyclamen.

Colors: Excavations in the near East, which recovered ancient glasses of opalescent hues, brought colors such as peacock blue and celadon green to the fashion forefront. Cool or warm, colors were always soft: mauve, gray, silver, violet, green, buff, pale yellow, rose and peach. The whole range of colors was more subdued than the Victorian period. Toning colors and harmonious color combinations important.

Design Shape: To be determined by schedule, container, plant material and artistic concept.

## **American Floral Designs**

### **Early Colonial 1607-1699**

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Characteristics: Seventeenth-century colonial American arrangements were informal, reflecting a lifestyle with few luxuries. Flowers, fruits, seeds, pods and grasses, cultivated and wild, fresh and dried (sometimes together) were arranged in simple, mixed bouquets.

Containers: Common household utensils such as kettles, bean pots, wooden bowls, glass bottles, bark baskets, earthenware pitchers, Delftware, pewter mugs and bowls, as well as copper, brass, or iron vessels.

Plant Material: Often native or wild; amaranthus, artemisia, bachelor's button, baptisia pods, bellflower, bittersweet, calendula, canna, cattails, celosia, cherry blossoms, convallaria, corn, daffodils, daisy, dame's rocket, dianthus, digitalis, ferns, feverfew, flax, foxglove, geranium, gourds, grasses, hemerocallis, herbs, hollyhock, honeysuckle, hydrangea, hyacinth, larkspur, lavender, lily, lunaria, lupine, magnolia, mallow, marigold, mertensia, mock orange, monkshood, nasturtium, nuts, pansy, pokeberry, primula, roses, rudbeckia, salvia, tansy, tulip, viola, yew.

Colors: Warm, bright or muted contrasting colors, including red, vermilion, rose, blue, Delft blue, lavender, purple, orange, saffron, apple-green and brown. Often complementing those found in household fabrics such as homespun, chintz, embroidery and India prints.

Design Shape: Circle

Accessories: Candlestick, inkwell, quill pen.

### **Late Colonial (Williamsburg) 1700-1780**

[CLICK HERE for Photos](#)

Characteristics: Reflective of their English and European roots particularly Georgian and French designs, but less formal-eighteenth-century American floral designs became more symmetrical and sophisticated. Fan-and triangular-shaped flower arrangements were lightly grouped at the top, sometimes 1 to 3 times the height of their containers, with flowers massed at the container's rim, often almost concealing the container. Some arrangements featured bouquets of one flower type, with a filler flower.

Containers: Chinese export porcelain bowls, vases and urns; epergnes in silver and porcelain; cornucopia, cachepots, Delftware and "bricks," wall pockets, finger vases, pewter and other metal chalices, mugs, bowls; stoneware jugs; Spode; Lustreware.

Plant Material: In addition to the Early-American list (see previous design): aquilegia, asclepias, aster, azalea, buddleia, chrysanthemum, clematis, coreopsis, cranberry, currant, dicentra, elderberry, gallardia, godetia, gypsophila, iris, kalmia, knifophia, lily, larkspur, phlox, poppy, mahonia, monarda, rhododendron, snapdragon, stock, tuberosa, verbena, viburnum, yarrow.

Colors: Colors tended toward muted contrasts with greens, blues, rose, and yellow-oranges, and whites.

Design Shape: Triangle, Fan

Accessories: Hourglass, needlework, often fruits and flowers were arranged on the table around the centerpiece.

## **Federal 1780-1830**

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Characteristics: The Federal Period in America was a culmination of several influences, both here and in Europe. Allied by their respective revolutionary experiences, France and the United States inspired each other in tastes and styles of the day. The excavations at Herculaneum and Pompeii reignited a passion for the ideals of patriotism, republicanism and Arcadia. The decorative arts began to reflect this interest with Greco-Roman motifs. With all this "classic" adornment came sparseness, an uncluttered and clean formality, beautifully suited to the interior styles of the day. Martha and George Washington are credited with the innovation of the Federal Style; he with importation of foreign plant material and she with formal floral arrangements adorning their home, Mount Vernon. Designs remained traditional symmetrical masses but were elongated or tall, flame-like shapes as would be found in a pair of mantel arrangements. In single arrangements, the triangle might be elongated in the horizontal direction as for a dining table. In both cases, the plant material would gently overhang the rim of the container. Within the stable mass shape, the plant material reflected "slim elegance."

Containers: Floral arrangements were often placed in tall, footed or pedestal vases, handled urns, epergnes or tiered pieces, cachepots, baskets and bowls of ceramic, silver, metal, or tole.

Plant Material: Choice of material emphasized favorites of the ancient world, such as golden wheat sheaves, ivy, oak and laurel leaves, and with fruits such as pomegranate, fig, peach and quince. Flowers included anemone, bachelor's button, camellia, hellebore, hemerocallis, hyacinth, lily, narcissus, platycodon, poppy, primrose, rose, and violet.

Colors: Restraint manifested itself in muted, restricted color schemes. Matte or grayed greens and blues with outlines of white or ivory were most popular.

Design Shape: Upside down cone

## **American Geometric Designs 1901-1950**

With the rise of the garden club movement, flower shows began to be held and the judging of arrangements began. Using the best from the Old European Masters and the classical style of the Japanese, flower arrangement began to merge into the mass-line arrangements of this period. Designs were organized according to rules, styles, or previously executed ideas or patterns. These classic designs were based on geometric shapes including ovals, crescents, spirals, triangles, the Hogarth curve, zigzags or other geometric forms. These designs have one center of interest near the center axis where all lines converge, but no crossed lines are evident. Graceful rhythm, created by gradation of line, texture, color and flower form, is characteristic of these designs. Traditional designs are designs in space with enclosed spaces of little importance. All traditional designs must be finished on the back and have depth. Beauty, unity, and harmony are achieved by creative selection of plant materials. There is little or no abstraction; plant materials are used in a naturalistic way.

## **Traditional Line Design**

[CLICK HERE for Photos](#)

[CLICK HERE for Horizontal Line Photos](#)

[CLICK HERE for Hogarth Curve Photos](#)

In a line arrangement, the line predominates. Strongly influenced by Asian design, the line is emphasized by a restrained use of plant material. Line designs are simple and clean cut, resulting in a sharp silhouette that is open. A set pattern is usually required, e.g., triangle, vertical, horizontal, Hogarth (S-curve), crescent curve, zigzag, etc. Likeness of line direction and materials used are preferred to contrasts. Inspired by the forms in nature, this design depends upon normal patterns of plant growth and existing curves.

## **Traditional Line Mass**

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This typically American design is a blending of European and Japanese design. A line mass arrangement is similar to a line arrangement, but there is more massing of the material, creating a greater depth—the third dimension that is practically nonexistent in line designs. Additional material is used at the rim of the container to enhance and strengthen the line and creates a center of interest. It follows the set patterns of the line arrangement (see above). It has an open silhouette, a pleasing outline and organized placement of materials resulting in a predetermined form. Must possess the linear qualities of a Line design but the additional plant material provides gradation and transition for balance and rhythm.

## **Traditional Mass**

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A traditional mass arrangement is a full, profuse arrangement with a variety of flowers in many forms, colors and textures typically arranged in a round, oval, triangular or fan-shaped design. It has a closed silhouette, more solids than voids. A direct adaptation of European design, mass designs are symmetrical, and balance is found by a gradation of sizes, forms and colors. Flowers should never be crowded but can be compact or airy depending upon the schedule. There is a fully developed focal area at the center axis using bolder flowers forms and brighter hues to add and hold interest. Lighter values are placed at the outer edges and top of the design for visual balance.

## **Contemporary Styles**

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Late Twentieth Century to Present

In the middle of the 20th century, flower arranging became increasingly recognized as an art form. Modern arrangers found themselves still inspired by 19th century naturalism, but they wanted to be freed from the past restrictions of specific period designs. As abstract art developed, many arrangers began to be inspired by this art form and to create abstract floral designs. Other arrangers wanted to break away from traditional rules and patterns, but did not feel drawn to abstract forms and so created other new design styles. Today's contemporary designs are an outgrowth of these two influences. As a result, Contemporary designs may possess varying degrees of abstraction, ranging from no abstraction at all in which the components are untreated and are organized into a naturalistic manner to a dominance of abstraction as you see in a purely abstract design.

## **About Creative Designs**

Developed in the mid 20th century, creative floral design refers to designs in which creativity, imagination, and originality are basic. Traditional rules and patterns do not apply. The arranger creates new concepts and forms by borrowing from different styles and/or periods. Arrangements are not a copy of a design previously created,

but rather an expression of the individual designer. The relationship between form and space plays a major role in creative arrangements. Today's creative designs are continually changing inspired by the current design world and the imagination of today's floral arrangers.

Characteristics of Creative Designs:

- Creative designs have few rules and no set patterns.
- Plant material may be used only for its inherent design qualities.
- Bold in form, size and use of color.
- Strong contrast in colors, plant materials.
- Restrained use of plant material and components.
- May have more than one focal point and more than one point of emergence, but clarity of design paramount.
- May have some abstraction.
- Little transitional material.
- Asymmetrical balance is emphasized.
- Rhythm may be irregular and unpredictable.
- Tension between elements creates impact.
- Any part of the design may be dominant.
- Space is incorporated within the design and becomes an important part of the overall impact. Both elements, solids and space, are considered solids and are equally important to the arrangement. That is why you often hear the phrase, "Creative designs are an arrangement of space, not an arrangement in space." The goal is to create rhythm and movement through the use of solid and space.

Containers: The container may play an important role in the design or there may be no container used at all. If a container is used, it is usually non-traditional and may have several openings. It should be bold and dramatic. Sometimes two or more containers may be used together in a creative manner. Pottery, ceramic, wood, metal are appropriate.

Plant Material: Bold materials are essential. Often exotic flowers and leaves, such as protea, antherium, birds of paradise, calla lily, fatsia, croton, caladium, palm, ti leaves, aspidistra, grasses, bear grass, etc. Dramatic branches like wisteria vine, willow vine, kiwi vine, and monkey puzzle vine. Branches may be fresh, dried and/or manipulated. Other creative materials such as driftwood, bamboo, weathered wood, seed pods, vegetables, and man-made objects like wire, cable, plastic, and rope.

Design Shape: Creative designs, like all designs, are based on the geometric forms of the cube, cone, cylinder, and sphere. However, in creative design, these basic forms may be distorted and combined and are more difficult to discern than in traditional design.

While creative designs break from traditional rules of flower arranging, the basic principles and elements of design are the benchmark for evaluating these non-traditional designs. The arrangers should demonstrate a creative and imaginative use of plant material and design principles as well as effectively using color, form, line, texture, and space.

## **Abstract**

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Creating abstract designs is an innovative and creative process in which unusual or reformed plant material is arranged in a non-naturalistic way to create new and exciting shape. To abstract is to reduce something to its simplest form, to render it unrealistic, to extract its essence and create a new image. Designing "with" space as well as "in" space makes a complete break with traditional floral design. Any plant material that interests the designer may be used. Plant material is utilized as pure line, form, and texture to create new images.

Characteristics: Abstract designs are bold in color and form. An abstract arrangement distills a concept to its essence, thereby releasing the design from nature and reality to become pure art. Everything used must be essential to the design. Plant material is no longer seen for what it is, but rather for what it represents—color, line, texture, form. Fresh and dried plant material may be used in a non-realistic manner, i.e., upside down, sideways, suspended, moving, or clustered to create a new form. Clipping, stripping, bending, tying, folding, placement, etc. may abstract fresh plant material. Fresh plant material may never be treated with substances to change color or texture. Containers, if used, are usually non-traditional and appear to be part of the design. Components may be man-made or natural items not often associated with flower arranging. Each item should be selected for its contribution to the design. When mechanics are used, they need not be entirely hidden if they appear to be a part of the design, are neat, and do not detract from other components or the design as a whole. There should be no one focal point; interest is equally distributed throughout the design

Abstract can be divided into two categories:

Objective designs are interpretive. They may have specific meaning, represent a theme or emotion, or interpret a class title.

Non-Objective designs are purely decorative and inspired by the materials used.

Containers: Abstract designs are cleaner and stronger without the use of a container. Plant material may arise directly from the base and/or background.

## Assemblage

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A **creative** three-dimensional, abstract design combining disparate, “found” objects and plant material into a unified whole. Influenced by artists Picasso and Braque’s early prototypical assemblages, which incorporated a variety of objects from everyday life, flower arrangers adopted the style and made them unique with the addition of plant material. (See About Creative Designs, p. 11)

Characteristics: The design is made up of several unattached parts, or several parts fastened together to form a single unit. Components are juxtaposed in non-realistic, non-naturalistic, and non-representational way. Use previously unrelated “found “ non-art objects and plant material for artistic effect. “Found” objects are non-art items not produced for decorative purposes and not previously used together. The arranger creatively relates the items through their unique elements of line, form color and texture.

Material: Found objects may be man-made such as metal, plastic, rope, wire, electrical or mechanical parts or they may be natural objects, such as shells, stones, and wood. The objects may be painted but should remain recognizable and not contrived.

Containers: None

Types: Free standing, sculptural, niche displayed, or mounted to a panel. A combination of these may be used.

## Botanical (Creative or Naturalistic)

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### Botanical: Creative

A **creative** design style in which plant material is chosen for its superior horticultural quality. Plant material must dominate the arrangement and create excitement by its color, form, texture, or placement. The design represents nature by showing all the phases of the plant material’s life, for example buds, partially opened blooms, full blooms in varying sizes, etc. but it does not put the flowers in their natural environment. Remember this is a creative design with boldness, simplicity and other creative features. (See About Creative Designs, p. 11)

Characteristics: Plant material must be pristine.

Other components or plant material may be used, but should be used to emphasize the botanical features of the plant material. These components may be man-made or natural line material. Their purpose is to highlight, but never dominate.

Containers: Use creative containers which harmonize with the flowers and other materials of the design.

Plant Material: Home grown plant material only. No abstracting of plant material. Rooted plants may be used.

### **Botanical: Naturalistic**

Characteristics: The entire life cycle of a single flower (often a bulb flower) must be represented. The design should include the stem, foliage, buds, blooms and roots in varying stages of development; which emphasize the beauty of the flower. There is no manipulation of the plant material. The arrangement should portray the plant as it appears in nature. Other flowers may be used as long as they are subordinate to the main flower.

The flower's natural environment may be suggested with the use of pebbles, mosses, stones, twigs etc. Must be home-grown plant material, not from a florist.

Containers: Use simple low containers so not to distract from the beauty of the plant specimens.

## **Cascade/Waterfall**

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A design style derived from the floral cascades of the Art Nouveau period.

Characteristics: Characterized by a downward, loose-trailing flow of materials, often heavy with foliage representing a cascading waterfall. Plant material flows from the center of the design out and over the container edges. Layers of alternating flowers and foliage create depth and texture. Try to build up an arrangement comprised of many levels, which is cohesive in spite of the variety of plant material and textures. There may be use of veiling, sheltering, decorative binding or other techniques.

Containers: Tall container generally needed. Container can be contemporary glass, pottery, metal, etc. If arrangement is displayed on a pedestal a plant saucer or low bowl may be sufficient. Make sure there is adequate room for the materials to cascade downward.

Plant Material: Long, pliable flowers and foliage. Bear grass, sprengeri fern, plumosa fern, conifers, vines, ivies, twigs, orchid sprays, string smilax, clematis, Small fragments of mirror, feathers, yarn, or metallic thread can be incorporated to give the appearance of reflected sunlight off the cascading water.

## **Construction**

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A creative design in which a strong architectural quality is the dominant feature.

Characteristics: Use of geometric form or forms combines to create a single unit, which must be "grounded" with strong stability. It must have a foundation like an architectural structure and not seem to be floating in space. Internal or volumetric space is vital to the design. It must appear to be a single unit but is a creation with a minimum number of bold plant and man-made materials. Additional plant material must be added to enhance the construction regardless of what the form is made of. (See About Creative Designs, p. 11)

Containers: The construction is the container.

Plant Material: Man-made materials such as lumber or plexiglass or strong-lined plant material such as bamboo, tree branches, mullein, palm spathes, etc.

## **Creative Line**

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[CLICK HERE for Western Line Photos](#)

A **creative**, open design style that emphasizes line and visual movement.

Characteristics: Creative line arrangements are boldly dramatic. They have no set pattern and may have more than one focal point, and possibly more than one point of emergence. The emphasis is on line, contrast of form and texture. Plant material is kept to a minimum, with the emphasis on its beauty and form. Don't overdo these arrangements! Let the beauty of the flowers and the line material prevail.

The line may be horizontal, vertical, oblique (movement halfway between horizontal and vertical), zigzag or Western (based on an open obtuse angle, which means greater than 90 degrees, it has a strong vertical line which meets an opposing downward thrusting line to create this angle). The focal point is the base from which these lines originate. It is important not to fill in the negative spaces created by this angle.

Unless the schedule specifies the direction, the choice is up to the arranger, and the only criterion is that the design be predominantly line. (See About Creative Designs, p. 11)

Containers: Modern, creative

Plant Material: Minimal material, beauty of blossoms or foliage emphasized by skillful placement. Line material may be natural, man-made or found objects.

## **Creative Line Mass**

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Follow the rules for a Creative line arrangement; however, more plant material is used, which results in slightly de-emphasizing the line.

## **Creative Mass**

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A **creative** design characterized by massed bold forms grouped in type arranged to give a sculptural appearance emphasizing contrast in form and texture. (See About Creative Designs, p. 11)

Characteristics: Creative mass designs give the designer a chance to use more material than the Creative line or Creative line mass require. The use of enclosed space is considered part of the mass, a significant change from Traditional Mass design. Asymmetrical balance is typical with color and textural groupings of components providing counter-balancing weight and rhythm. Striking contrast, simplicity, restraint, and a lack of transitional material are other characteristics of the Creative Mass design. Small amounts of several plant materials or larger amounts of fewer types are used. Plant material is grouped by like color, form, or type, and then massed along lines or spaces created by lines.

Containers: Plain ceramic or pottery, geometric containers or irregular assemblages of glass, wood and metal. Bold containers.

Plant Material: Manipulated leaves, dried leaves of contorted forms, bold blossoms, fruits, vegetables. Material can be bundled, layered, terraced, looped, pinned, stapled, or otherwise manipulated.

## Echo

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A **creative** design, much like a synergistic, but may have only two containers. The containers may be the same shape, but a different size or color, usually the smaller one would be placed in front of the larger and off-set, echo like, no connecting material is used. (See Synergistic.) (See About Creative Designs, p. 11)

## Floor Design

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Floor Designs are typically very tall and staged directly on the floor. They are given unlimited height unless prohibited in the schedule. They are often attached to a base for stability. Underlays may be used as long as they do not elevate the design. The design originates from the floor. The show committee may choose to define each exhibitor's allotted space on the floor with tape. Proportion is the most important element of design. Because of their size they require bolder individual components or groupings of smaller components to satisfy the greater dimension offered to the designer.

## Framed Spatial

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This is a **creative** minimalist design organized as a single unit suspended within a frame. A non-traditional, light airy design with an unconventional use of plant material combined into a single, unified design, which is then staged within a volume of space defined by a frame. (See About Creative Designs, p. 11.)

Characteristics: No movement is permitted, but is implied. The unit is secured by using monofilament or thread so it appears to be floating within the frame.

The design may not touch the frame, but may exceed the depth of the frame.

The feeling of this creative arrangement is light and airy. The suspended design must be creative.

## Free Form

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As the name implies, this **creative** design is a closed silhouette in which outline is free and flowing, like an amoeba, not a geometric shape. (See About Creative Designs, p. 11.)

Characteristics: It is a closed design, with no intersecting or straight lines.

Containers: Natural objects such as weathered wood or pieces of fungus.

Self-made containers that reinforce the line and may have several openings.

Oriental style containers. Simple bowls or rustic pottery that don't detract from the design.

Plant Material: Mostly flowers, vines, and branches.

Plant material is manipulated by bending or twisting. Negative space is very important, and balance is asymmetrical. Plant material is usually placed on or within the enclosed form. There may be more than one point of interest.

Restraint is used in the amount of plant material so as not to confuse the design.



## Hanging Design

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A design that is suspended and viewed at eye level or a little above.

There are two types of hanging designs: one that has no movement and is suspended from a flat surface such as a door, wall, easel, etc. The other may have one or more moveable parts and is suspended from above, on a hook, from a light fixture, or within a frame. In both types of hanging designs, there may be two or more designs that are combined to create a unified composition. Also see Kinetic designs.

## Illuminary

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A **creative** design, which incorporates light as an integral part of the design. (See About Creative Designs, p. 11)

Characteristics: Not just a design with a light focused on it. Lights of various types are incorporated into the design itself. Lights can be placed above, underneath, behind, or within the design, but not in front as a spotlight. Emphasis is on color, pattern and balance. Mechanics must be concealed. Light sources may include LED lights, rope lights, lighted tubing, colored lights, strings of lights and should be battery-driven if possible. The lights contribute an additional quality to the design, extending areas of interest, adding balance of color, and creating a greater depth. Be mindful that the primary colors of light are different from those of the pigment system, and you should be aware of the resulting colors when you combine lights and plant colors.

## Miniature Arrangements

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Any style arrangement which does not exceed five inches in any direction.

Characteristics: Miniatures can be of any style or any design ("period," oriental, mass line, etc.) Employ all the rules of artistic design. Scale and proportion are the most important. The largest bloom should not exceed one-third the size of container and the arrangement should be approximately one to one-and-a-half times the height or width of the container. A small amount of plant material is desirable. Avoid crowding. Conditioning is essential.

Containers: The container should be small, so that it does not dominate the design. Use miniature vases or create from household items: matchboxes, saltcellars, snuffboxes, perfume bottles, toothpick holders, buttons and natural materials (shells, driftwood, stones, etc.).

Plant Material: Some successful plant material includes lily of the valley, baby's breath, miniature roses, boxwood, small wildflowers, violets and herbs. Larger flowers such as lilac or yarrow may be separated into smaller parts. Some "dwarf" or miniature flowers may be too large for design. GCV rules permit altering plant material unless the schedule states otherwise. You can cut a flower down with scissors to ensure proper scale.

Colors: One color should dominate the design. Use of too much contrast can overpower a miniature or small design. This, of course, does not apply to some "period" designs.

Accessories: Accessories can enhance the theme but must be in the same scale and too many accessories will detract.

Special Tips and Helpful Hints for Miniature and Small Arrangements

- Research the schedule. Then find a container and create your "zinger," the novel idea that gives the design distinction.

- Scale: The most common fault is an out-of-scale design. Usually, for a five-inch miniature arrangement, the container is no more than two inches and the material no more than three inches high.
- Flower choice: Blossom size must not be more than one-half to three-fourths inch.
- Display: Know your space, background color, and staging. Backgrounds of soft gray and celadon are most popular. Use no more than two-thirds of the space allowed. A display base can enhance the arrangement and is not considered an accessory.
- Conditioning is essential to harden plant material. Soak material up to heads in warm water for several hours. Arrange, mist, cover with damp facial tissue in covered cooler overnight.
- Bases and Accessories: Choose carefully. Never use an irreplaceable item. You may need to stabilize with glue, clay or stick-‘um.
- Transporting: It is so much easier on the nerves to do the arrangement at home. Use a Styrofoam container, a muffin tin or an egg carton with doughnut-shape cotton support to keep arrangement from moving en route. Carry in your cooler with ice.
- Mechanics: Water with a medicine dropper. Mist with a perfume atomizer. Use fingernail scissors, tweezers, toothbrush bristles and toothpicks for tools. Use tweezers for placing flowers and manicure scissors for pruning. Use cut potato, oasis, sand, steel wool or grapes to support material. There are miniature kenzans. Use a sturdy box or cake stand to elevate arrangement as you work.
- Practice, practice, practice. Develop your eye to see possibilities in tiny flora, containers and accessories.

## Mille Fleurs

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This is French meaning “a thousand flowers.”

Characteristics: Many different kinds of flowers and colors are employed. They should be arranged in a light, airy fashion in a contemporary vase.

A three-dimensional effect is desired and achieved by the careful placement of flowers and use of color.

Design Shape: rounded or fan-shaped

## Mobile - Kinetic

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A kinetic, **creative**, free hanging design suspended from above with real movement created by air currents. This is achieved by creating perfect balance among the groupings of the freely moving parts. It must have equal interest throughout. Forms, textures, and colors are balanced as well. Mechanics and conditioning of plant material are most important. (See About Creative Designs, p. 11)

## Modern European

New millennium European arrangements are distinguished by shape: tight and round with an emphasis on texture. Colors may be monochromatic or contrasting.

As of 2002, more daring styles have been emerging, offering many creative possibilities. The key characteristic is the use of flowers in a bizarre, unexpected way, i.e., upside down.

## Modern French

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Characteristics: Modern French designs begin with an overarching theme or concept, which may be inspired, for example, by a season, a region, nature, textures, or a color. All of the elements of the design, container, flowers, accessories, must be related to the theme and form a coherent whole. While the arrangements are dense and

flower-filled, lush foliage and vines are used above and around the bouquet to achieve lightness and movement. Foliage should be in colors that best compliment the blossom choices.

Containers: must be an integral part of the arrangement, often handmade using different floral techniques to coordinate with the theme, cylindrical shape.

Plant Material: mix unusual materials, mix textures, mix expected with unexpected elements. Use a variety of plant material including fruits, vegetables, branches, pods, and berries.

Colors: sophisticated, interesting, monochromatic or analogous colors, pastels or brights.

Design Shape: bouquet in the round, hand-tied bouquets

## **Naturalistic (Landscape or Vegetative)**

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Based on nature and capture the essence of a natural landscape scene. The design does not seem contrived or artificial, but represents a slice of nature. The plant material should be of high quality but does not have to be a horticultural show quality specimen. The proper scale is vital for these designs to be successful.

Containers: Minimal containers which complement the flowers and other materials. As little of the container should be seen as is possible. Avoid over-basing the design with too wide or thick a base or with too many levels.

Accessories: Should be in keeping with the naturalistic design. If you wish to add birds or animals, use those which look realistic with a matte finish and keep them in scale.

### **Naturalistic: Landscape**

Characteristics: A landscape design represents a large view such as a wilderness panorama or a formal garden, which has been reorganized in a planned manner by the designer. Rather than depicting a natural scene exactly as it appears, the designer organizes the elements into planned groupings with graduated heights as seen in nature, but with a superimposed decorative scheme. If interpreting a large landscape, the groupings may represent what is seen by using branches to depict trees, and spray form flowers to represent bushes.

Plant Material: Flowers from the same season must be used to provide a more authentic look.

Accessories: Stones, mosses, soil, and gravel may be used as part of the foundation.

Container: Use a large, low container.

### **Naturalistic: Vegetative**

Characteristics: This design is one in which plant materials are positioned as they would grow in nature. The flowers used should be those that are found naturally growing together within a particular environment. Imagine taking a spade to the garden and simply transplanting it to a container.

The materials in the vegetative design are arranged in natural groupings and left in a more or less unaltered condition. They should be shown with blemishes intact. Plant materials are arranged spatially as they grow in nature, with lots of variation in heights and texture.

Plant material: Materials should be selected according to seasonal compatibility. Other materials such as rocks, moss bark and twigs may be used as they would be found in nature.

Container: Use a large, low container.

## Panel

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Panel is a **creative** design, which includes a panel or panels, plant material, and other components. The panels must be integrated within the design. The panels can either be self-supporting or be supported by the other components in the design. A background does not constitute a panel. (See About Creative Designs, p. 11)

## Parallel

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Characteristics: Parallel designs have three or more units of strong, parallel lines with open (negative) spaces between each unit. Units may be of the same or varying lengths with clear, dominate, directional thrust. They may be horizontal, vertical, or oblique. Unit composition may be one of four possible compositions:

- Units having several different plant materials, none repeating in the other units.
- All units having the same types of repeating plant material.
- Each unit having a single plant material.
- One plant material, repeated in each unit, combined with other plant material.

Units must appear as one composition, emerging from a single container or what appears to be a single container. Units appear to be independent of each other but related by color, texture, pattern, form or another element of design. Plant material or other components may be placed at the base of the design to connect the units, achieve visual weight and balance, and unify the design.

Plant material: Achillea heads, small hydrangea flowers, heuchera, ivy, mahonia leaves, conifer, hebe, poppy seed heads, berries, chili peppers. Allium, Bells of Ireland, and bamboo sticks, are excellent verticals. Carnations and roses are favorite flowers for massing in groundwork and using in vertical placements. Lichen, and assorted mosses may be used to create areas of 'rest' and to cover the floral foam. Vegetables, fruit and items such as spheres, stones or pebbles add interest.

## Pavé Design

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This arrangement requires placing individual materials closely together to create a flat, jewel-like pattern in which no mechanics are seen. This tight clustering style emphasizes contrast, color, and texture. The Pavé design and the technique developed from the jewelry industry, which uses the term to describe setting gems closely together.

Characteristics: Tight clustering of plant material. Contrasting type, color, and texture for added interest. Can be helpful to lay out pattern before you begin to arrange.

Containers: Low, flat, inconspicuous containers.

Plant Material: Blossoms, leaves, fruit, pods, mosses, stones.

## Phoenix

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This design is based on the mythological bird, which lived for 500 years or more, set itself on fire, and rose from the ashes to live again. Rebirth and a round symmetrical form are the basis of this design. The plant material at the base is traditional and compact, a radial design with very little space between the material. A burst of material emerges from its center. Form, Scale, and Proportion are important elements and principles of this design.

Characteristics: This design has a base of flowers, which is compact and round. Rising from the center are tall, flowering branches or other linear material, representing rebirth, renewal. The stems should radiate out at the top.

Containers: Low containers are suggested.

## Pillar

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A **creative** design featuring the dominance of the cylindrical form. Plant material may be densely packed within the tube and soaring upward, but still echoing the cylinder shape. Plant material must be kept within the visual boundaries of the form. The design may have more than one unit. (See About Creative Designs, p. 11)

Containers: Tubes may consist of metal, cardboard, plastic, glass, or fabric.

## Pot-et-Fleur

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This design consists of two or more rooted plants and cut plant material in a single container. It should not be organized as a landscape or terrarium. Rooted plants may be all flowers, all foliage or a combination of the two. Plants may be kept in their pots, placed in plastic bags or placed in a planting medium. Cut fresh flowers may be inserted in small bottles, floral tubes, or floral foam, and hidden among the plants. Other plant material such as fruit, nuts, or branches may be added for embellishment. Moss may be used to cover the top.

Containers: Baskets or pottery bowls often used.

## Reflective

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A **creative** design that reflects light back to the viewer. Reflective components must appear throughout the design. Some materials may include: Plexiglas, foil, metallic paper, or pieces of mirror. Simply placing a mirror underneath or behind the design does not fulfill the reflective design requirements. (See About Creative Designs, p. 11)

## Small

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A small arrangement may not exceed eight inches in any direction. Scale and proportion, as in miniature arrangements, are of utmost importance, and good conditioning is essential. Please see description under miniature arrangements.

## Stabile - Kinetic

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A kinetic, **creative** design with a fixed base, but motion is implied. The direction may be vertical, horizontal, or diagonal and must be dynamic or flowing. The sense of movement is achieved by the selection of components and a very restrained use of plant material. The design may rise from a container, stand alone on a pedestal or table-top, be suspended from a base, or stabilized in another creative manner. All components including the base and mechanics should contribute to this dynamic feeling of implied motion. (See About Creative Designs, p. 11)

Plant Material: Ferns, grasses, or vines are some examples of plant material that could be used to imply motion.

## Stretch

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A **creative** design, which consists of two units, one larger than the other, and has a strong component connecting the two (the “stretch” component). This connective component between the two units should be dynamic and imply tension as if the two units were involved in a “tug of war”. The units should appear as if they had been one, with some of the same plant material in each, but have been pulled apart. The placement of the two units is key so as to enhance the tension and create depth. (See About Creative Designs, p. 11)

## Synergistic

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This **creative** design consists of three or more units, which have a greater impact when viewed together than they would on their own. All the units share the same colors, textures and forms, creating balance, rhythm, and harmony, but each unit should not appear as a completed design in itself. A connective (either man-made or plant material) may be used to connect the units. (See About Creative Designs, p. 11)

## Table Design

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A table exhibit is one in which the components - dishes, linens, plant material, etc. are artistically arranged to present a coordinated concept. The practical service of food need not be implied. Objects are used for decorative effect, but flatware and food items should not be used. There are two types of table designs, functional and exhibition, and both require decorative components. A functional exhibit's components are set logically as if food would be served. For exhibition, components are arranged artistically with non-functional placement. The principles of design should be adhered to in the artful placement of the components. Avoid overcrowding. Vary heights to add interest.

## Underwater

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An underwater design must have some or all of its components, including plant material, visible underwater. Underwater designs may submerge only a part or parts of the arrangement. The amount of plant material submerged is dictated by the design principle of proportion.

Plant material should be assembled in the container before adding water. Upon completion, all materials in and out of water should appear as a unified design. If transporting to a show, water should be added when arrangement is in place. It is important that all components are pristine. Add water close to the level of the rim unless the design is enhanced with another height. The water line becomes part of the design and is distracting if poorly placed. Your mechanics should not be visible. Often a small weight such as a fishing sinker, marble or rock attached to fishing line is used to anchor plant material underwater. Water and glass have a wonderful and unique way of distorting a design and can give an additional, and sometimes unexpected, dimension.

Containers: Usually clear glass and any shape, but a circular container provides the best effect.

Plant material: This is the major challenge for the arranger. Tropical flowers such as anthuriums, birds of paradise, and heliconia work well. Also lilies, roses, evergreens and citrus are good choices.

## Western Line

[See Creative Line](#)

# In the Asian Manner

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## Japanese Design - Ikebana

Ikebana is the Japanese art of flower arrangement, which is steeped in tradition and symbolism. It is a discipline with a long history and considerable body of literature. It is an art form in which nature and humanity are brought together. The word itself means “living flowers.” Ikebana, while working with ephemeral materials, flowers, leaves, etc., accepts the transience of all things and in attempting to express their essence, acknowledges man’s place in nature. The spiritual aspect of Ikebana is considered very important by its practitioners. Where western flower arrangers rely on massed flowers for their impact, presenting a completed work to be admired, Ikebana uses line and space. The arrangement reaches toward the viewer and by making the viewer the focal point, it draws us in and invites us to share in the creative act.

In the basic Ikebana arrangement, and its variations, three main lines or placements are used. To the Japanese these lines are not just a framework but have special significance and names. Not all Japanese schools of arranging use the same names for the main lines, but they all have the same significance. If connecting lines were drawn between these three, they would form an asymmetrical triangle. Additional much shorter supporting material is also used to support the dominating lines and add grace and form to the arrangement. These main lines are listed below:

Line 1, usually a branch, should be between  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 times the width and the depth of the container. Called the Shin (or subject line).

Line 2 can be the same material as line 1, should be about  $\frac{3}{4}$  the length of line 1. Called the Soe or (secondary line).

Line 3, which could be a branch or a flower, should be  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  the length of line 2. Called the Hikae (and Tai or object line).

Additional shorter material is called the Jushi (or subsidiary lines).

These main stems are said to represent “heaven, man, and earth”, symbolizing that man is found between the sphere of heaven and the soil of earth and by arranging is supposed to harmonize the two.

Characteristics: Considered an art and a discipline leading to self-awareness.

Asymmetrical balance is used.

Space is a very important part of Ikebana. It’s a dynamic element in the composition, not just emptiness.

Material follows the growth line of the plant, reaching upward toward the sun. Arrangements are three-dimensional, reaching toward the viewer.

Simplicity in line is important.

Employs the use of minimalism. Excess leaves, shoots, etc. are removed to achieve a more powerful effect.

Cut flowers and accessory materials are placed as in nature, with buds, blooms and foliage as they are found in their natural growth, though groomed and pruned to perfection.

Lines are vibrant and rhythmic giving the illusion of captured growth.

Containers: Are considered a key element of the design.

All Japanese compositions are three-dimensional and have fine qualities of balance and spacing. Emphasis is placed on line and form rather than color. The following naturalistic or informal styles are only a few that we might see in our GCV flower shows and do not begin to address the fascinating subject of Japanese flower arranging.

## **Moribana**

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**Moribana** is the simplest and most naturalistic style of Japanese flower arranging. As such, more flowers and colors may be used than in earlier Ikebana styles.

Characteristics: Supporting lines may be more abundant, and placed lower, than the three main lines to achieve a more natural look. However nothing must destroy the simplicity of the lines or the voids between them. The tips of the three main lines should form a three dimensional triangular shape, and additional plant material should be placed within the confines of the triangle. Restraint is an important factor, as is emphasizing the purity of the form of the plant materials. Water is an integral part of the design. In warm weather the pin holder goes to the back of the arrangement so that we get the cooling sight of the water. This is reversed in cool weather. The pin holder goes to the front, or back, right, or left of the container, with the empty part balancing the design. Two thirds of the container should be left free of plant material. Rhythm and proportion are achieved through taking advantage of the natural forms of the chosen plant material, and balance by the placement of those materials. Refer to general description of Ikebana above for length and placement of linear plant material.

Plant materials: In adaptations of formal Ikebana, such as this, plant material choices are not limited to Oriental plant species. Generally one type of plant material is used for the Heaven and Man groups -and it may be branches, evergreens or flowering stems. The earth group is usually chosen from another plant group. Plant choices should be seasonal.

Containers: Containers should be low and flat, made of simple materials such as pottery or wood. They are often subdued or neutral in color. If a more distinctive color is chosen, it should harmonize with the colors of the arrangement. Bases may be used, to achieve balance or proportion in the design. They too should be simple wood or ceramic platforms.

## **Nageire**

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Nageire means “thrown in,” as it emphasizes arranging flowers in their natural state. .) The design emphasizes the natural shape and bend of the plant material, and they should be studied and selected “as is” rather than modified.

Characteristics: Branches are fixed without the use of a pin holder (kenzan), but they follow the same general rules of all Ikebana in terms of placement. (Please refer to general description of Ikebana above for length and placement of linear plant material). Because it is more naturalistic, flexibility should be used, and the beauty of a natural line should outweigh the exact rules governing placement. The design may be upright or slanted. Material is traditionally arranged so that one-half of the container mouth is left open. It is important that the main branches be well fixed, so that they have a unified appearance as they emerge from the vase, and will look as if they are coming from a single point.



Containers: A cylinder, a tall curved vase, bamboo, or any tall, heavy container can be used. They usually have a small opening. Glass or lightweight containers are unsuitable. Forked sticks traditionally support the plant material, as it is rarely long enough to reach the bottom of the tall containers. A notch is cut out of a branch as thick as a finger, which is then placed at an angle inside the vase but below the rim. The plant material for the arrangement can be interlocked into the notch for support. The arranger can also balance the plant material by cutting it at an angle and wedging it against the side of the container. It is important that there is harmony between the vase and the plant materials.

Plant materials: In adaptations of formal Ikebana, such as this, plant material choices are not limited to Oriental plant species. Generally one type of plant material is used for the Heaven and Man groups-and it may be branches, evergreens or flowering stems. The earth group is usually chosen from another plant group. Plant choices should be seasonal. In Nagiere, the natural shape and curve of the chosen material is particularly important.

## **Free Style**

This is a modern Japanese style of arrangements where the natural world, i.e. heaven, earth and man, are only suggested. They may be naturalistic, but nature is expressed, rather than recreated. If the schedule calls for it, they may be completely abstract, focusing only on design and pure form.

Characteristics: Designs are less contained, less ordered than traditional Ikebana with an open, dynamic, linear quality. The natural lines of the plant material are emphasized, and create the shape of the design, which often radiates from a given point. It may have more than one area of interest. Simplicity is emphasized with a limited amount of plant material. Designs are not two-dimensional, must have depth like all Ikebana styles.

Containers: May be very non-traditional, but must be an integral part of the design.

Plant material: The choice of material is unrestrained-and may include paper, plastic, metal or dried plant material. Some fresh plant material is required. Careful analysis of plant form, color, and texture should be considered in order to decide how to best use it. Various techniques such as wiring and stripping, or cutting of leaves to alter their shape, are often used.

[More Information on Japanese Ikebana](#)

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# Glossary

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## GARDEN CLUB OF VIRGINIA GLOSSARY

**ABSTRACT:** Expression of ideas in an unrealistic manner. Emphasis on the non-naturalistic.

**ACCESSORY:** A subordinate component in a design other than plant material; container, base, background or mechanics. Schedule governs use; if not prohibited in the schedule, can be used.

**ADVANCING COLORS:** Warm hues such as orange, yellow or red.

**ANALOGOUS COLOR HARMONY:** Closely related colors that are next to one another on the color wheel. Usually match well and create serene and comfortable designs; found in nature. Use fewer than three adjacent hues, no more than one third of the color wheel, and no more than one primary color.

**ANCHORING:** See Technique.

**ANNUAL:** A plant that normally completes its life cycle in one growing season.

**ARMATURE:** Framework or grid work constructed for mechanical and/or decorative purpose.

**ARRANGEMENT:** Synonymous with design and composition.

**ASIAN MANNER:** Art of flower arrangement using traditional or modern Asian designs, which are steeped in tradition and symbolism.

**ASYMMETRICAL BALANCE:** Visual stability achieved by an equilibrium of visual weight on either side of the imaginary central axis, though the components used on each side are different. See Balance.

**AXIS:** An imaginary straight line that divides an arrangement into equal parts.

**BACKBOARD:** A surface against which an arrangement is seen. Unless specified otherwise by the schedule, it is to be considered a neutral background like a wall, and the arrangement is not to be judged using it as a frame of reference.

**BACKGROUND:** The surface against which an arrangement is viewed. Includes back and sides, when present, as well as the surface beneath arrangement.

**BALANCE:** A design principle; visual stability achieved by placing equal visual or actual weight on opposite sides of an imaginary central axis. Balance is achieved through the proportion, scale and placement of the elements as well as their visual force. See Asymmetrical Balance and Symmetrical Balance.

**BANDING:** See Technique.

**BASE:** An optional object on which the container rests. This component is considered part of the container.

**BASING:** See Technique.

**BIENNIAL:** A plant that normally completes its life cycle within two years. The bloom occurs only or primarily the second year.

**BLOOM:** A blossom; an open flower.

**BRACT:** Modified leaf at the base of a flower or flower head. May be small and scale-like, or large, brightly colored, and petal-like; or resemble normal foliage. Is not considered to be a bloom.

**BRAIDING:** See Technique/Weaving.

**BUD:** For the purpose of exhibition, an unopened or partly opened bloom.

**BULB:** A modified underground stem, which is typically very short, flattened, and surmounted by a group of usually fleshy, non-green scale-like leaves. In horticultural classification corms, tubers or thickened rhizomes may be considered bulbs, as they resemble them and have similar cultural requirements.

**CACHE POT:** A decorative container often used as a receptacle for a standard pot. Permitted unless the schedule prohibits.

**CARD OF INTENT:** A 3X5 inch card on which the arranger states their inspiration and expression of the class schedule. See Statement of Intent. Allowed unless prohibited in the Schedule. See Statement of Intent.

**CHALLENGE CLASS:** A class in flower shows where the Flower Show Committee supplies identical components to each arranger; arrangers create a design from the Schedule using some or all of the components.

**CHROMA:** The perceived intensity of a color determined by the degree of freedom from white, gray, or black.

**CLUSTERING:** See Technique.

**COLLAGE:** A flat surface on which plant materials and, optionally, other components, are attached to create a low relief.

**COLLARING:** See Technique.

**COLLECTION:** An exhibit of specimens, three or more, of cut flowers. Judged for perfection and variety.

**COLOR:** A design element; visual response of the eye to light waves. There is a corresponding relationship between the principles of design and color. Warm colors (yellow, red, orange) seem to move forward. Cool colors (blue, green, violet) recede and seem farther away. An area of cool color will seem smaller than an equal area of warm color. See Hue, Chroma, Value, Tint, Tone, Color Harmony.

**COLOR HARMONY:** Techniques for combining colors. See Complementary, Analogous.

**COLOR WHEEL (CIRCLE):** A circle of colors arranged to show the relationship between colors; primary (those that cannot be created by mixing), secondary (those created by mixing primary colors), and complementary (those opposite each other on the color wheel).

**COMPLEMENTARY COLOR HARMONY:** Colors opposite each other on the color wheel. Creates a vibrant look.

**COMPOSITION:** Synonymous with Arrangement or Design.

**COMPONENTS:** Materials from which a design is composed; plant material, container, background and mechanics; determined by the Schedule. Optional components include accessories, featured objects and bases.

**CONDITIONING:** Preparation of cut plant material to ensure lasting freshness. A consideration in the judging process of the exhibit.

**CONFORMANCE:** Adherence to requirements of the Flower Show Schedule.

**CONSERVATION:** The practice of preserving and protecting native plants.

**CONTAINER:** Any receptacle that can hold water and provide support for plant material. Contributes to the design. A container may be made of multiple receptacles, which touch each other and appear as one. Container may be set on a base. See Base.

**CONTEMPORARY DESIGN:** A design using imagination and creativity for new approaches in both the selection and organization of components while using the principles and elements of design. Not using traditional or geometric styles.

**CONTRAST:** A design principle; use of opposite or unlike elements to emphasize differences and evoke interest.

**CONTRASTING COLOR HARMONY:** A combination of hues, values and intensities, which are farthest apart on the color wheel.

**CONTRIVED FORM:** A form created from fresh, dried and/or treated plant material.

**CORM:** A bulb-like swollen under-ground stem stored with reserve food and bearing buds or growing shoots on its surface, for example crocus, gladiolus, cyclamen, colchicum.

**CREATIVITY:** Inventiveness and originality in choice of components and their organization within the principles of design.

**CRESCENT DESIGN:** A composition in which components are arranged in an arc or semi-circle; the arc length should be between a half and a whole circle.

**CULTIVAR:** A horticultural exhibit of a plant or group of plants selected for desirable characteristics that can be maintained by propagation. The cultivar name consists of the scientific Latin botanical name followed by a cultivar name in a vernacular language in single quotation marks. For example, Paeonia 'Bowl of Cream'.

**CUTTING:** Propagation by stem cutting of a shrub or tree to make a plant with identical characteristics.

**DECORATIVE WOOD:** Dried wood of interesting form; polished, treated or weathered.

**DESIGN:** An arrangement organized using the elements and principles of design resulting in beauty, harmony, distinction and expression. Synonymous with Arrangement and Composition.

**DIRECT COMPLEMENT:** Hues directly opposite each other on the color wheel.

**DISABILITY POLICY:** The Garden Club of Virginia Disability Policy: In any class, where joint entries are not permitted, the Show Chairman can allow an exhibitor with a disability (temporary or permanent) to have the physical assistance of one person. This person should not be an experienced designer.

**DISBUDDING:** The thinning out of flower buds to improve the size and quality of bloom.

**DISTINCTION:** Noticeable superiority in every respect.

**DISQUALIFY:** To remove an entry from consideration because of non-conformance to schedule requirements. Duty of the Passing Committee.

**DOMINANCE:** A design principle; control of a design by one or more of the elements. It implies the presence of primary and subordinate elements within the design.

**DRIED PLANT MATERIAL:** Plant material from which all moisture has been removed.

**ELEMENTS OF DESIGN:** The visual qualities of the parts or components used in an arrangement—space, line, form, size, texture, pattern, color. See the Principles and Elements Of Design section in the online [GCV Flower Shows Handbook](#).

**ENDANGERED PLANTS:** Native plants whose status in the wild is listed in a conservation priority ranking system as in danger of becoming extinct. See Threatened Plants.

**FAMILY:** The name of a group of plants with similarities in their structures.

**FEATURE:** To give prominence to.

**FEATURED OBJECT:** An object used as a dominant component in a design. Schedule to govern use. For example; “An arrangement featuring a book...”

**FOAM BOARD:** See Backboard.

**FOCAL AREA or FOCAL POINT:** An area in an arrangement to which the eye is drawn.

**FOLIAGE:** The leaves of a plant.

**FORM:** An element of design; three-dimensional form of the whole arrangement. Forms of the individual components; open, closed, linear, solid, etc.

**FRAME OF REFERENCE:** The area available to an arranger in which to stage a design, as delineated in the Schedule.

**FRAMING:** See Technique.

**FROND:** The leaf of ferns cycads, and certain palms.

**FREE-STANDING DESIGN:** A design to be viewed from all sides.

**GENUS, GENERA (pl):** A sub-group of plants with similar characteristics within a Family.

**GRADATION:** A gradual change in size, form, color or texture; used to provide visual movement.

**GROOMING:** Procedures to ensure that a specimen presents the best possible appearance. Cleaning of flowers, foliage, and pots and removal of damaged leaves or blooms, spray residue, dust, shed pollen, etc. Leaves may not be polished with any product that alters the natural character of the foliage.

**HARMONY:** The pleasing organization of all components of a design. Or use of similar components or color throughout an arrangement.

**HEDGING:** See Technique.

**HOGARTH CURVE DESIGN:** A composition in which components are arranged in a curve which suggests a smooth, flowing S curve. The curve can be horizontal, vertical, or slanted.

**HORIZONTAL DESIGN:** A composition in which components are arranged on an axis parallel to the horizon.

**HUE:** The name of an individual color.

**INFLORESCENCE:** The characteristic arrangement of buds and flowers on the stem or branch; a mode of development of individual florets.

**INTERPRETIVE DESIGN:** A design of any style that expresses or explains an idea. For example; a description in a Flower Show Schedule.

**INTENSITY:** The luster or brilliance of a color that can be measured. Dullness is its opposite.

**KENZAN:** The Japanese name for a flower pin holder or “frog”.

**KINETIC:** Dynamic, energizing.

**KUBARI:** A straight, bent or forked branch or twig used to support material in an arrangement. An Ikebana term.

**LAYERING:** See Technique.

**LIGHT:** A design element; light is necessary for vision. Light sources can be artificial or natural in the staging area and hall of a Show and can be within a design.

**LINE:** A design element; a visual path that leads the eye through the design and establishes the structural framework of the design. It carries the rhythm through the design. The line can be vertical, horizontal, zigzag, curved as in a crescent or Hogarth curve, or any path that leads the eye through the design.

**LUMINOSITY:** Relative brightness; mix hues with white to make them more luminous.

**MANIPULATED PLANT MATERIAL:** Plant material which has been altered from its natural condition including, but not limited to, bending, cutting, folding, and braiding.

**MECHANICS:** Components that control an arrangement and thereby ensure its stability (pin holder, oasis, clay, wire, tape, etc.). Mechanics should not be exposed except as an integral part of the design.

**MOBILE:** A group of freely moving, suspended forms, having visual balance with actual movement produced by air currents.

**MODERN:** Current trends in the Arts and in flower arrangement.

**MONOCHROMATIC:** Consisting of one hue, its tints, tones, and shades. (White is not a hue.)

**NATIVE PLANT:** Any plant native to the region in which it is growing.

**NICHE:** A defined space enclosed on three sides as stated in the Schedule.

**NOVICE:** In the Artistic classes, one who has not won an individual Blue ribbon in a GCV Flower Show. In the Horticulture classes, one who has never won an individual horticulture blue ribbon in *any* show approved by the GCV flower show's sanctioning flower society. A horticulture exhibitor may be considered a novice in each of the GCV flower shows sanctioned by the American Rose Society, the American Daffodil Society or the North American Lily Society.

**ORGANIC:** See Sustainable Practices.

**OVERLAY/DRAPE:** If there are no restrictions in the Schedule about altering the staging area, an overlay or drape may be used.

**ORIGINALITY:** Use of independent thought and imagination for a fresh approach of aspect, design or style in an arrangement.

**PARALLEL:** Shapes such as lines, curves, or even concentric circles that are equidistant from each other.

**PATTERN:** A design element; visual quality created by a combination of lines, forms, colors, textures, and spaces in the design.

**PAVÉ:** See Technique.

**PEDESTAL:** A plinth, stand, or column, freestanding or attached, used as staging for a flower arrangement.

**PERIOD ARRANGEMENT:** A design with characteristics typical of an historic period. Plant material need not be authentic but must interpret the class.

**PEDICEL:** The stem of a single flower on an inflorescence. See Inflorescence.

**PERENNIAL:** A plant that lives for more than two years. In flower shows, generally includes herbaceous plants hardy to the area in which they are being exhibited.

**PESTICIDE FREE:** See Sustainable Practices.

**PETIOLE:** Leaf stalk.

**PLAITING:** See Technique/Weaving.

**PLANT IDENTIFICATION CARD:** A 3X5 inch card on which an exhibitor lists the botanical and common names of an exhibit such as a collection.

**POINT SCORING:** The evaluation of exhibits using a pre-determined scale of points for each set of characteristics of an arrangement.

**PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN:** Basic artistic standards used to organize the design elements—balance, dominance, contrast, rhythm, proportion, and scale. See the Principles and Elements Of Design section in the online [GCV Flower Shows Handbook](#).

**PROPAGATION:** Reproduction of plants with spores, seeds, or using vegetative methods such as cuttings.

**PROPORTION:** A design principle; relationship of one area of an arrangement to another area of the arrangement or to the whole.

**RACEME:** Same as spike, but with short-stalked flowers, for example delphinium.

**RECEDING COLORS:** Cool, low saturated, dark value colors (blue, green, and violet) which visually recede.

**RHIZOME:** A thick, horizontal stem (under or above the ground) which forms roots, stores food, and sends up leaves and flowering stalks.

**RHYTHM:** A design principle; dominant visual path through a design. It is achieved by the use of gradation and repetition in a linear direction.

**ROLLING:** See Technique.

**ROOT:** The underground part of a plant that acts as an organ of absorption, aeration, and food storage or as a means of anchorage and support, and differs from a stem especially in lacking nodes, buds, and leaves. Usually underground.

**SCALE:** A design principle; the relationship of the size of the individual parts of a design (components) to each other. For example, scale is the size of a flower in relation to the size of the space allowed.



**SCHEDULE:** Printed document listing Horticulture and Artistic classes, Flower Show rules and requirements for participants. Known as "The Law of the Show."

**SEEDLING:** A young plant raised from seed.

**SHADE:** A color achieved by adding black to a hue.

**SHELTERING:** See Technique.

**SIZE:** A design element; the physical or implied dimensions of line, shape, form and space.

**SPACE:** A design element; includes the area in which the design is placed, and the open areas in and around an arrangement.

**SPECIES:** A group of plants forming a subset of a genus. The species is the second portion of a plant's botanical name and is generally not capitalized.

**SPECIMEN:** A single plant, bloom, fruit, spike, spray, stalk, or vegetable.

**SPIKE:** A lengthened inflorescence bearing stemless flowers, for example, gladiolus (see Raceme).

**SPLIT COMPLEMENT:** One hue and the analogous colors to its complement color (total of three hues) on the color wheel. The complement color itself is not used. See Complementary Color and Analogous Color.

**SPORE:** A reproductive body, simpler than a seed, produced by almost all non-flowering plants, for example, ferns, fungi, lycopodiums.

**SPORT:** A mutation. An abrupt deviation from type, resulting from a change in the hereditary material and producing a growth of a different visual form, color or character. Must be propagated by cuttings or tissue culture to maintain these characteristics.

**SPRAY:** A branched, many-flowered inflorescence usually on a single main stem, for example, polyantha and floribunda roses.

**STABLE:** A static sculptural form, implying motion, although fixed in position at the base.

**STACKING:** See Technique.

**STALK:** A stiff stem of a plant. Any slender, supporting or connecting part of a plant.

**STATEMENT OF INTENT:** A brief explanation by the exhibitor of the message the exhibit is intended to convey, or of the symbolic meaning of any component(s). Written on a 3X5 inch card and placed next to the arrangement at a Show. Same as Card of Intent.

**STEM:** The stick-like part of a plant, which grows above the ground and from which the leaves and flowers grow. In a Show, may refer to the entire cutting including the stem, leaves and flowers.

**STYLE:** A way of doing something that is unique to a person or period. An arranger's own technique. An arrangement or design described in the GCV Flower Shows Handbook.

**SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES:** Growing flowers organically using techniques such as crop rotation, compost, and green manure and excluding the use of manufactured additives such as fertilizers and pesticides.

**SYMMETRICAL BALANCE:** Using similar components on each side of the imaginary central axis of the arrangement.

**SYNERGY:** A mutually advantageous conjunction or compatibility of components.

**TECHNIQUE:** Methods of preparing components when creating an arrangement.

**ANCHORING:** Piercing the bottom of weak stems with picks or small sticks to help hold them more securely in oasis.

**BANDING:** Circling of plant components with decorative material such as copper wire.

**BASING:** Creating a foundation of plant materials to create textural detail, cover oasis and mechanics, and give visual weight to taller stems.

**BINDING:** Tying materials together into bunches to hold stems together. Can be decorative or functional. Several containers can be tied together using a binding technique.

**CLUSTERING:** Positioning the same material so close together that the identity of the individual is lost and the cluster functions as a single unit of color and texture.

**COLLARING:** Making a collar or frill at the base or underside of a flower holder. Use greens, or other ornamental material.

**FRAMING:** Outlining an arrangement on one or more sides with additional material to define the designated space to focus attention on the arrangement.

**HEDGING:** Trimming materials into a form; inspired by topiary designs.

**LAYERING:** Groupings of material are overlapped to create a textured design. Spacing is important and can vary the results.

**PAVÉ:** Placing plant material closely together to form a pattern that may be flat or contoured.

**ROLLING:** Rolling flat materials such as leaves. The subsequent rolls may be used to hide mechanics or simply as interesting additions to an arrangement.

**SHELTERING:** Placing material over or around other components thereby creating enclosed spaces that can become focal points.

**STACKING:** Placing materials singly or in bunches side-by-side or on top of each other.

**TERRACING:** Placing materials in an overlapping manner to create a stair step effect. Material should be lower on the side or sides to be viewed for visual effect.

**VEILING:** Placing light components, using see-through plant material or threads, over more solid components to create a sheer overlay effect.

**WEAVING/BRAIDING/PLAITING:** Interweaving materials by a set or contrived pattern to create texture.

**TERRACING:** See Technique

**TEXTURE:** A design element; visual surface quality of components, for example, rough or smooth, dull or shiny.

**THREATENED PLANTS:** Native plants whose status in the wild is listed in a conservation priority ranking system as likely to become an endangered species. See Endangered Species.

**TINT:** A color achieved by adding white to a hue.

**TONE:** A characteristic of color; a hue which is not at full intensity. Achieved by adding grey or the hue's complementary color to a hue.

**TRADITIONAL:** Arranging style typically refers to all floral designs originating worldwide prior to the early twentieth century.

**TREATED PLANT MATERIAL:** Dried plant material that has been painted or tinted or otherwise changed from its natural dried state.

**TRIAD:** Three hues equidistant on the color wheel.

**TRUSS:** A cluster of flowers or fruits growing from one main stem, for example, rhododendron, or tomato.

**TUBER:** A swollen underground stem, usually rounded, with buds or "eyes" from which new plants or tubers are produced, for example, potato.

**UNDERWATER:** Placement of plant material under water or partially under water in a Creative Design such as an Underwater Design or other creative arrangement style.

**UNITY:** The combining of parts resulting in a harmonious effect.

**VARIETY:** A sub-group of a species. Used for naturally occurring variants. See Cultivar for species selected by man. The terms cultivar and variety are sometimes used interchangeably, however, for Show purposes, cultivar is the accepted use.

**VEGETABLES:** The parts of a plant that are used for food. Includes, but not limited to, seeds, tubers, bulbs, stems, and fruit.

**VEILING:** See Technique.

**VOIDS:** Spaces created in a design.

**WEAVING:** See Technique.

**VALUE:** The lightness of a color (tint), a mixture of pure hue and white, or the darkness of a color (shade), a mixture of pure hue and black.

**VERTICAL DESIGN:** A composition in which components are arranged on an axis perpendicular to the horizon.